

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, RESTORING THE SKOKOMISH WATERSHED: A THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN, JUNE 2007

The Skokomish River lies within a critical watershed for recovery of multiple species of endangered fish and wildlife, for recovery of our troubled Hood Canal marine ecosystem, and for rejuvenation of local communities threatened by significant, persistent flooding. Strong, durable partnerships have formed in the Skokomish watershed and beyond that seek to turn the tide of worsening conditions and restore the river for the benefit of future generations. The Skokomish Watershed Action Team – a diverse, informal partnership of governments, land managers, and others working collaboratively to restore a healthy Skokomish watershed – has prepared this Three-Year Action Plan to help inspire and guide restoration work.

Two key actions will determine the overall effectiveness of Skokomish watershed restoration:

1. fixing US Forest Service roads in the upper watershed, and
2. promptly completing a General Investigation study by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Mason County, and Skokomish Indian Tribe.

Restoring the upper watershed will eliminate many of the sources of watershed degradation, including excess sedimentation and concentrated storm runoff. The General Investigation will develop an integrated restoration plan for the entire watershed, with the Corps providing critical technical oversight and expertise. While the outcome of other state and local restoration efforts rely on these two critical actions, their proper execution depends solely upon full federal support.

For the upper watershed, this three-year restoration action plan identifies projects totaling \$17.8 million, with a need for federal funds totaling **\$15.5 million**. Upper watershed actions focus on recovery of aquatic species and habitat protection and recovery, primarily through implementation of road treatments such as decommissioning, stabilization and drainage upgrades, and culvert replacements. The work will provide long-term benefits to the recovery of water quality in the Skokomish River and Hood Canal, fish habitat, and endangered species, including two salmon species and bull trout.

In the lower watershed, a total of approximately **\$1.73 million** of federal funding is needed in the next three years (matching approximately \$1.73 million in local funding) to complete the General Investigation so that a comprehensive restoration and flood protection action plan can be implemented and current restoration activities, such as the Skokomish/Nalley's estuary project, can be assured success. As this definitive study of the lower watershed moves forward, project partners will continue to implement other projects in the lower watershed, spending a total of approximately \$24.5 million in the coming three years.

The Skokomish Watershed Action Team's funding strategy for this three-year action plan identifies 25 separate funding sources, such as landowners and local, state, and federal governments. The total cost for all 42 projects in the upper and lower watershed is \$48.6 million, which includes the \$17.23 million appropriation needed for federal support.